



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **CHURCHILL DOWNS TO OFFER SPECIAL TRAINING PERIOD FOR BELMONT HORSES; AREA RACING FANS INVITED TO WATCH JUSTIFY TRAIN 7:30-7:40 A.M.**

**LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Wednesday, May 23, 2018)** – With unbeaten Triple Crown hopeful **Justify** and four other possible Belmont Stakes contenders stabled on the grounds, Churchill Downs Racetrack will offer a special 7:30-7:40 a.m. (all times Eastern) training period for those horses starting on Thursday. Additionally, area horse racing fans are invited to watch those colts train from the first floor of the facility free of charge.

Churchill Downs Racetrack will open its Paddock Gate entrance between 7-8 a.m. each morning through Monday, June 4 so the public can watch Kentucky Derby and Preakness winner Justify along with rivals **Bravazo**, **Free Drop Billy**, **Restoring Hope** and **Tenfold** prepare for the 1 ½-mile third jewel of horse racing's Triple Crown – the 150<sup>th</sup> running of the \$1.5 million Belmont Stakes (Grade I) on Saturday, June 9.

Guests may park free of charge in the Orange and Black Lots outside of the Paddock Gate.

Video of the exercises will be shown on the Big Board and infield video screens at Churchill Downs. Those unable to attend can watch an online live stream of the daily exercises with commentary at [www.KentuckyDerby.com/Works](http://www.KentuckyDerby.com/Works) from 7:20-7:45 a.m. through Monday, June 4, thanks to **TwinSpires.com**, the country's leading online and mobile betting platform and official betting partner of Churchill Downs, the Kentucky Derby and Breeders' Cup World Championships. Also, clips of the activity will be uploaded on the Kentucky Derby YouTube channel.

The special 7:30-7:40 a.m. training period over a freshly-harrowed and congestion-free track will follow the 7-7:30 a.m. renovation break. It will remain in place through Tuesday, June 5 – the date many of the Belmont Stakes contenders will ship to New York. Training hours at Churchill Downs are 5:30-10 a.m. daily.

**WinStar Farm**, **China Horse Club**, **Head of Plains Partners** and **Starlight Racing's** undefeated Justify (5-5-0-0—\$2,998,000) is expected to return to the track Thursday at 7:30 a.m. for a jog – his first exercise on the track since winning Saturday's Preakness Stakes at Pimlico Race Course by a half-length over Bravazo. He returned to Churchill Downs' Barn 33 on Sunday afternoon.

Trainer **Bob Baffert's** chief assistant **Jimmy Barnes** is overseeing the training duties of Justify until the Hall of Fame conditioner returns to Louisville from his Southern California base this weekend.

Baffert has suggested that Justify could breeze between June 2-4 in advance of the Belmont Stakes, although the Scat Daddy colt's daily schedule remains fluid. Baffert's 2015 Triple Crown winner **American Pharoah** breezed twice at Churchill Downs in advance of his successful Belmont Stakes victory and Triple Crown sweep. The equivalent dates of those breezes on this year's calendar would be Tuesday, May 29 and Monday, June 4.

According to published reports, the Belmont Stakes field could possibly be comprised of the following 11 horses (with trainer): **Audible** (Todd Pletcher), **Bandua** (Dermot Weld), **Blended Citizen** (Doug O'Neill), Bravazo (D. Wayne Lukas), Free Drop Billy (Dale Romans), **Gronkowski** (Chad Brown), **Hofburg** (Bill Mott), Justify (Baffert), Restoring Hope (Baffert), Tenfold (Steve Asmussen) and **Vino Rosso** (Pletcher).

Only 12 horses have swept the Triple Crown: **Sir Barton** (1919), **Gallant Fox** (1930), **Omaha** (1935), **War Admiral** (1937), **Whirlaway** (1941), **Count Fleet** (1943), **Assault** (1946), **Citation** (1948), **Secretariat** (1973), **Seattle Slew** (1977), **Affirmed** (1978) and American Pharoah (2015).

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